

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are now pending in the application. Claims 1-21 stand rejected. Claims 1 & 15 have been amended. Support for the amendments can be found in Figures 4 and 7 as originally filed and, as such, no new matter has been presented. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hofschneider (U.S. Pat. No. 6,669,421) in view of Mason (U.S. Pat. No. 4,650,208), and further in view of Brilmyer (U.S. Pat. No. 5,580,201). Claim 21 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Hofschneider in view of Mason, and further in view of Brilmyer as applied to Claim 15 above, and further in view of Reichelt (U.S. Pat. No. 6,113,299). In view of the amendments and arguments herein, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

In rejecting the claims, the Office cites Hofschneider for teaching a plate having a pair of generally flat bearing surfaces. Applicant respectfully traverses this characterization. Applicant submits that, notwithstanding the lines drawn over the curved surfaces in the Office Action, the cited surfaces are curved, and not flat as asserted. As such, Applicant submits the references does not teach the "flat" or planar limitation.

In an effort to expedite prosecution, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1 and 15. In this regard, Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to clarify that the

channels define a pair of planar bearing surfaces which are parallel. Applicant submits that Hofschneider does not teach this limitation. Further, Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to clarify that the plate defines an aperture with a pair of flat aperture bearing surfaces which are in contact with at least one of the planar channel bearing surfaces. Applicant further directs the Examiner's attention to Claims 3 and 17 which contain the limitation that the aperture is "T-shaped." Applicant submits that none of the references teach a "T-shaped" aperture having flat bearing surfaces.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Dated: April 16, 2007

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

CAE/lf-s/smb

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

Christopher A. Eusebi
Reg. No. 44,672